



Full Governing Body

21 November 2019, 4:30 pm – 6:30 pm, Orleton C of E Primary School

Minutes

Present: Camilla Argyle (acting chair), Adam Breakwell, Rev'd Matthew Burns, Wes Coleman, Jane Keenan, Kerry Martin, Emma Morgan, Sallie Peacock, Lucy Rossiter

1. Apologies

Apologies from Lyn Broom, due to a work commitment.

2. Conflicts of interest

These were provided separately in writing for the new school year.

3. Election of chair and vice-chair

Camilla was elected as chair (proposed by Sallie and approved unanimously). Kerry was nominated as vice-chair (proposed by Camilla and approved unanimously), with Matthew as a back-up vice-chair in circumstances where a non-parent governor is required.

4. Appointment of committee members

Sallie was appointed chair of the Curriculum & Outcomes committee (with Lyn as vice-chair); Jane was appointed chair of the Finance & Premises committee (with Wes as vice-chair), and; Kerry was appointed chair of the Personnel & Pay committee (with Matthew as vice-chair).

5. Head teacher's report

The report had been circulated in advance. Governors noted teething problems with the new outdoor spaces, which are being addressed, and queried the challenges with the new Year 6 class. The group does not gel well together, and there are some new joiners who have specific circumstances which need attention. This makes it more difficult to get on with the work. Year 6 has had a specific teambuilding day this term, which has helped.

6. Budget update

Latest figures show a slight overspend in line with the budget (compared with the predicted shortfall of £15-£20k). This will have an impact on the carry forward but will be redressed in the coming financial year because of higher numbers. There are 181 on roll, compared with 179 on census day. Class budgets are tight given higher numbers but not extended budgets, so where possible the school is buying in bulk the resources which the whole school uses. Governors noted some significant losses on school trips, particularly as not all parents pay, and it was agreed that trips should be cancelled if not enough parents have paid. It was confirmed that there is a disclaimer already on the letters which go out to parents about every trip. It was also agreed that school should provide a breakdown of the costs involved in putting on a trip, to help show how expensive trips can be and how they are already subsidised by the school.

7. Premises

The new play equipment has gone in, with many thanks to the parents who volunteered to help, with woodchips. The shed has also been really popular, and the final part of the project is the planting. The school is applying for a grant for astroturf under the slide. There has been some flooding in Bev Jenkins' neighbouring garden, so children are not allowed to play in that part of the field at the moment. Alf Jenkins is providing boards to show which areas are open and closed, to manage wear and tear in different parts of the playing field.

The new building project was discussed in some detail, and it was noted that the school is not the highest priority for new buildings in the county. The agreed approach is to submit plans for the full project, with a provision of around £100k to be funded by school and pre-school. As this would be to replace three temporary buildings it is therefore more likely to be funded.

The legal claim continues following a staff injury.

8. Social media guidelines for parents

Parent governors have drawn up some guidelines for how parents should be using (and not using) social media. This includes a code of conduct for parents and carers, reminding parents and carers of the positive and negative impacts of social media in the context of school.

The process for ensuring how these guidelines are adopted was discussed, including whether or not parents and carers should be required to sign the code of conduct. It was agreed that were this request from governors, then parents and carers may be more likely to read, sign and return it, as it would be distinctive from other things from school.

Parent governors have also drafted a social media policy, which is quite in-depth. This should be in line with existing policies and behaviour. It was noted that social media posts should not refer to class names, which in a small school can be a significant identifier.

It was agreed that any policies that require updating can be circulated for remote sign-off, with consent assumed if there is no response within a given timeframe.

9. Well-being

There had been a significant discussion at the Herefordshire leadership conference about well-being, and governors welcomed the additional interventions which the school does well, e.g. Libby as counsellor and Dolly the dog. Kerry was appointed link governor for mental health and well-being, and will develop an action plan which also notes all the things which school is already doing.

10. Safeguarding

Camilla was appointed safeguarding link governor (as this role has historically been carried out by the chair). There is some overlap between children with Special Educational Needs and safeguarding, and the number of issues at Level 3, and many of these will require separate safeguarding meetings given issues of confidentiality.

11. SEND provision / SENCo's report

This has been circulated and read, and SEND policy needs updating on the school website (including link governor contact). Wes Coleman was appointed link governor for children with SEND.

12. Christian distinctiveness

Matthew has now been through a SIAMS inspection under the new framework, which has provided really helpful and constructive feedback. SIAMS looks at seven strands and gives one main judgment based on these. The main question is how effectively the school's distinctive Christian vision is established and promoted by leaders, enabling pupils and adults to flourish. Matthew will attend SIAMS training on 3 December, and Matthew and Sallie will attend training on 4 March on Christian vision and SIAMS. Governors expressed concern about the impact on teachers of additional work required for SIAMS, for which an inspection is expected in 2020-21.

There was some discussion of the school's value of kindness. This is not exclusively a Christian concept or vision, but it is a Christian value and has a Biblical basis, and is well-linked through school's existing worship pattern. More work is required to articulate the theological basis for this, and values such as "no learner left behind".

All agreed that the Christian ethos of the school is evident but that this will need further work during the current year ready for September 2020.

13. Feedback from chairs' briefing

Herefordshire data in 2019 were high compared with national, and thanks had been extended to all schools in the county. EYFS was also above national, and promising data both for those on Free School Meals and for boys' Greater Depth in Reading were noted.

School targets have been sent out by Alison Naylor (who has replaced Lisa Fraser at the LA). Adam has challenged these as unrealistic, and this has been found to be the same in other schools. Alison has accepted revised targets and this is still a work in progress.

The new Ofsted outline focuses on four “deep dives”: one will be reading, and then three others including one foundation subject. Governors suggested a link governor for reading, and Lyn was proposed. There will also need to be a link governor for wider curriculum, for which Sallie was appointed.

Schools had raised the issue of pay, given that the government has only provided a quarter of the funding for the increase of 2.7% which it promised and for which it took credit.

14. Feedback from head teachers’ leadership conference

Camilla gave further feedback from the leadership conference, and appreciated that Orleton governors are clearly ahead of many other schools, noting the following areas which are important for a functioning governing body:

- The right people;
- Understanding of the role and responsibilities;
- Good chairing;
- Professional clerking;
- Good relationships based on trust;
- Knowledge of the school – data, staff, parents, children, community;
- Commitment to ask challenging questions;
- Confidence to have courageous conversations in the interests of the children and young people.

Camilla commended the training available from NGA for chairs and clerks, and Mark will circulate the training programme when it becomes available.

15. Minutes of meeting of 20 June

The minutes of the previous meeting were unanimously approved.

16. Matters arising not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda

e.g. updates on Monday after-school surgeries and other opportunities for parent-teacher-governor interaction and pre-school governance

Emma Jenkins has been appointed and has proved very able and a real asset. Concerns which had been raised have not become an issue, in part because she has been given some unpaid time off to pursue her training course. The arrangement seems likely to continue beyond March 2020, in which case Adam would recommend appointment for a further full year.

It has not worked so well sharing the office / receptionist role between Helen and Julie. Parent governors agreed that there is a negative impact of a job-share in the front office role and requested further conversation with Helen about additional hours and availability. Some inaccuracies with invoicing for after-school clubs were queried by governors. These continue to be addressed.

There was really positive feedback from the three families who took the opportunity to meet governors informally on Thursday 21 November.

With regard to school meals, it would be very helpful for school menus to be attached as pdf files, and for there to be greater flexibility in the timeframe for ordering meals and improved communication with parents. Mark will take these concerns to the other directors of the Orleton School Food Company.

17. Any other business

It was noted that governors’ induction could be improved, and this will be looked at in more detail by a working group, including the governors’ handbook.

Policies had been circulated and were approved in principle subject to some changes noted. Final versions will be circulated for final approval. Governors requested that the key points for children in the anti-bullying policy be easily visible to children in school.

SLT has conducted two assemblies in the first half term specifically on the behaviour system.

Intensive counselling with Libby has worked out really well for the child who joined from Kingsland. His behaviour has improved dramatically and he is now fully participating in mainstream education. This has been such a significant change that it was recommended that this approach be used elsewhere. Kimbolton and Ludlow schools are already taking the opportunity for counselling.

There was a fixed-term half-day exclusion on 20 November. Lyn confirmed this as then chair.

18. Meeting schedule for 2019-20

23 January 2020 (committees, from 4pm)

19 March 2020 (FGB, 5-7pm)

14 May (committees, from 4pm)

2 July (FGB, 5-7pm)

Links to Training Available

<https://www.hereford.anglican.org/training&events/>

<https://www.herefordshiregovernors.org.uk/copy-of-training-events>

Actions List

#	Action	By whom	By when	Status
<i>Meeting of 21 November 2019</i>				
6.1	Provide cost breakdown for each school trip	SLT	next trip	
9.1	Develop an action plan for well-being	Kerry	Spring term	
12.2	Articulate theological basis for school values	Matthew / Sallie / Mark	Summer term	
14.2	Circulate HGA training programme	Mark	when available	not yet available
16.2	Discuss alternative solutions for front office staffing and bring a new proposal to governors	Adam	Spring term	
16.4	Raise governors' concerns re: Orleton School Food Company at next directors' meeting	Mark	asap	Next meeting is on 9 December
17.1	Update governors' handbook & induction process	Adam / Camilla / Mark	Spring term	
17.2	Finalise draft policies and circulate	Adam / Mark	Christmas	